

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph at page 17, line 23 – page 18, line 4 with the following rewritten paragraph:

When the sulfur component is released from the sulfur component holding agent 61, however, the exhaust gas flowing out downstream of the sulfur component holding agent 61 contains a greater amount of the sulfur component than the exhaust gas discharged from the internal combustion engine. In the exhaust emission purification device 23 according to the first embodiment, therefore, the sulfur component releasing process for the sulfur component holding agent 61 is carried out in such a manner that the sulfur component releasing conditions are satisfied and the working position of the flow rate regulation valve ~~58~~68 is changed to the bypass position to allow the greater proportion of the exhaust gas to flow into the bypass-side branch pipe 66d. As a result, as long as the sulfur component releasing conditions are satisfied, substantially no exhaust gas flows into the NO<sub>x</sub> holding agent 62 and thus the exhaust gas containing a large amount of a sulfur component is prevented from flowing into the NO<sub>x</sub> holding agent 62.